

TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FISCAL REVIEW COMMITTEE



FISCAL MEMORANDUM

SB 800 - HB 1178

March 30, 2021

SUMMARY OF ORIGINAL BILL: Requires a county election commission that has permanently established convenient voting centers to provide a report to the Coordinator of Elections including an evaluation of the centers, issues, and suggestions for improvements within 90 days after each general election.

FISCAL IMPACT OF ORIGINAL BILL:

NOT SIGNIFICANT

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENT (005807): Deletes all language after the enacting clause. Effective January 1, 2022, establishes that any county, during or prior to 2020, that conducted a successful pilot project for the establishment of convenient voting centers is permanently authorized to do so. Effective upon becoming a law for administrative duties of the act, authorizes Weakley, Sullivan, and Sumner Counties to participate in the pilot program for federal, state, and local elections held in 2022. Prohibits the Coordinator of Elections from approving a voting center pilot program for any county that has not used at least one early satellite voting location in the most recent November election.

FISCAL IMPACT OF BILL WITH PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Unchanged from the original fiscal note.

Assumptions for the bill as amended:

- Monroe, Wilson, and Williamson Counties were authorized to participate in the pilot project for local elections in 2019, and federal, state and local elections in 2020. Rutherford County, pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-3-308(a), is permanently authorized to establish voting centers.
- Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-3-307, the Coordinator of Elections is required to file a report following any election under the pilot program by January 31.
- According to the January 2021 report on the 2020 election cycle, each county that wants to establish voting centers will incur initial costs to set up the proper technology and mail notices to voters to identify the locations of the centers. Monroe and Williamson Counties utilized their county IT departments and students from local colleges to prepare

the voting centers; Wilson County contracted a third-party IT consultant. Each county purchased routers and secure servers.

- If a county consolidates polling locations into voting centers, they will see a reduction in staffing needs. In 2020, Williamson County saved \$15,000 and Wilson County saved \$23,080 in expenses for poll officials. Monroe County did not reduce locations; therefore, no staffing expenses were reduced.
- It is assumed that Weakley, Sullivan, and Sumer Counties will choose to participate in the pilot program and establish convenient voting centers if the savings over multiple years are equivalent to the initial costs of purchasing technology and mailing notices to voters; therefore, the net impact to state and local government is not significant.
- The Coordinator of Elections can continue to submit an annual report regarding the convenient voting centers within existing resources.

CERTIFICATION:

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Krista Lee Carsner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Krista Lee Carsner, Executive Director

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